

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric for repair of in particular inguinal or hiatus hernias, comprising

- a base sheet (~~1, 1', 1'', 1'''~~) of layered, flexible mesh material;
- a passage (~~3~~) in the base sheet (~~1, 1', 1'', 1'''~~) for a body canal, in particular for the spermatic cord or the oesophagus; and
- an insertion slit (~~5~~) between the contour (~~4, 9~~) of the base sheet (~~1, 1', 1'', 1'''~~) and the passage (~~3~~) for insertion of the body canal into the passage (~~3~~); and
- a sewing bridge (~~7~~) which is located in the vicinity of the mouth (~~6~~) of the insertion slit (~~5~~) and which is able to be folded down on the insertion slit (~~5~~) and, on both sides thereof, to be stitched to the mesh material of the base sheet (~~1, 1', 1'', 1'''~~);₂

—————characterized

- ~~- in that the sewing bridge is a bridge tongue (7) which is cut to size in one piece with the mesh material of the base sheet (1, 1', 1'', 1''').~~

2. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the sewing bridge is a bridge tongue (7) has a rectangular basic shape of such dimensioning that, when it is doubled up, the insertion slit (5) is covered at least as far as slightly upstream of the passage (3). which is cut to size in one piece with the mesh material of the base sheet.

3. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim ~~1~~ or 2, characterized ~~in that~~ wherein the bridge tongue (7) ~~covers~~ has a rectangular basic shape of such dimensioning that, when it is doubled up, the insertion slit (5) on both sides substantially symmetrically is covered at least as far as slightly upstream of the passage.

4. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to ~~one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 2, characterized ~~in that~~ wherein the bridge tongue (7), ~~where directly adjoining the mouth (6) of~~ covers the insertion slit (5) ~~into the contour (4, 9) of the base sheet (1, 1', 1'', 1''')~~, is integrally attached to the base sheet (1, 1', 1'', 1''') on both sides substantially symmetrically.

5. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~, characterized ~~in that~~ claim 2, wherein the bridge tongue, where directly adjoining the mouth of the insertion slit into the contour of the base sheet (1, 1', 1'', 1''') ~~and/or, is integrally attached~~ to the bridge tongue (7) base sheet have rounded corners (2, 2').

6. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to ~~one of the preceding claims~~, characterized ~~in that it is cut to size from meshed sheet material preferably of polypropylene by the aid of a laser cutting beam.~~ claim 1, wherein at least one of the base sheet and the bridge tongue have rounded corners.

7. A hernia mesh fabric according to ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized by a metal-containing, continuous, biocompatible coating.~~claim 1, wherein it is cut to size from meshed sheet material preferably of polypropylene by the aid of a laser cutting beam.

8. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 7, ~~characterized in that the coating is a titanium-containing coating of a thickness of less than 2µm, preferably of 5 to 700 nm.~~1, comprising a metal-containing, continuous, biocompatible coating.

9. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to ~~one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the bridge tongue (7), in a condition of pre-fabrication, is doubled up and stitched to the mesh material of the base sheet (1, 1', 1'', 1''')~~(5); claim 8, wherein the coating is a titanium-containing coating of a thickness of less than 2 µm, preferably of 5 to 700 nm.

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10. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim ~~10, characterized in that the unilateral stitching arrangement is a double-stitched seam (12), comprising an outer seam (14) and a seam (15) which is displaced inwards at a distance therefrom.~~1, wherein the bridge tongue, in a condition of pre-fabrication, is doubled up and stitched to the mesh material of the base sheet on one side of the insertion slit.

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11. (Currently Amended) A hernia mesh fabric according to claim 10, ~~characterized in~~

that wherein the unilateral stitching arrangement is a double-stitched seam~~(12)~~, comprising an outer seam~~(14)~~ and a seam~~(15)~~ which is displaced inwards at a distance therefrom.